

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

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PASS AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:EAGR, EEC

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE EC ACTION ON WALNUT IMPORTS

REF: EC BRUSSELS 7830

1. DURING THE COURSE OF AN INFORMAL CONVERSATION ON OTHER MATTERS, TERENCE WINDLE, CHIEF OF THE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE DIVISION IN THE COMMISSION, TOLD A MISSION OFFICER THAT THE COMMISSION WAS WORKING ON A PROPOSAL FOR LONG-TERM CHANGES IN EC IMPORT ARRANGEMENTS ON WALNUTS. ACCORDING TO WINDLE, THE FRENCH HAVE NOT MADE AND ARE NOT EXPECTED TO MAKE A FORMAL REQUEST FOR SAFEGUARD ACTION ON WALNUTS DURING THIS PRESENT SEASON. THE FRENCH ARE INTERESTED, HOWEVER, IN PERMANENT CHANGES IN THE EC IMPORT SYSTEM WHICH IN EFFECT WOULD TIGHTEN UP PROTECTION AGAINST COMPETITIVE WALNUT IMPORTS. THE COMMISSION APPEARS TO BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE FRENCH POSITION. WINDLE SAID THAT WHAT IS IN THE COMMISSIONS'S MIND IS A PROPOSAL FOR SOME SORT OF MINIMUM IMPORT PRICE SUCH AS THE REFERENCE PRICE WHICH EXISTS ON OTHER FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, ALTHOUGH HE SAID THAT IT WOULD NOT BE CALLED A REFERENCE PRICE. HE CLAIMED THAT THIS WOULD HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF MORE STABLE ACCESS TO

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THE EC MARKET, UNLIKE THE PRESENT SITUATION IN WHICH THERE EXISTS

THE CONSTANT THREAT OF FRENCH CALLS FOR SAFEGUARD ACTION.

2. WINDLE WONDERED HOW THE US WOULD REACT TO SUCH A MEASURE. MISSION OFFICER COMMENTED THAT THE US WOULD NOT LOOK FAVORABLY ON ANY ADDED PROTECTION AGAINST OUR WALNUT EXPORTS. WE PREFERRED AT A MINIMUM THE CONTINUATION OF OUR PRESENT ACCESS TO THE EC MARKET. WE ASKED WHETHER THE EVER-PRESENT POSSIBILITY OF FRENCH REQUESTS FOR SAFEGUARD ACTION WAS THAT MUCH OF A THREAT SINCE THEY WERE UNJUSTIFIED AND BY EC STANDARDS SHOULD BE DENIED. CERTAINLY THE PRESENT SITUATION WAS PREFERABLE TO A LONG-TERM MINIMUM IMPORT PRICE SYSTEM. WINDLE DID NOT RESPOND TO THESE COMMENTS.

3. WINDLE CONFIRMED THAT SUCH A SYSTEM WOULD NEED COUNCIL APPROVAL BEFORE IT WOULD TAKE EFFECT. HE ALSO STRESSED THAT THE INFORMATION HE WAS PASSING ALONG WAS MORE OR LESS JUST "CHIT-CHAT" AND CERTAINLY DID NOT CONSTITUTE AN OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION THAT A COMMISSION PROPOSAL WAS BEING PREPARED.

4. WE LEARNED FROM ANOTHER SOURCE, CORNELIS DRIESPRONG, HEAD OF THE COMMISSION'S DIRECTORATE WHICH HANDLES FRUIT AND VEGETABLES, AMONG OTHER PRODUCTS, THAT THE COMMISSION IS CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING EXPORT SUBSIDIES FOR WALNUTS, WE INFER THAT THIS WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE SAME PROTECTIVE SYSTEM WINDLE DISCUSSED. GREENWALD

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